

same as the Senator who is expressed on page 24 of Roll Call, saying we have to overcome the 15-vote deficit, it won't happen. We have about maxed out at 80 percent.

The letter I am going to send to the President will say a number of things. Among other things, it will say:

A strong spirit of bipartisanship has held together the coalition of Democrats and Republicans who negotiated the compromise and has sustained the Senate through 2 full weeks of debate on the bill. Unfortunately, that bipartisanship was largely absent in a crucial vote last Thursday.

Then I will go on to state to the President the percentages I just outlined.

I further say in the letter to the President:

We appreciate the efforts of you and other Republicans who have worked with us to get the bill this far. But we believe it will take stronger leadership by you to ensure that opponents of the bill do not block the path to final passage. Simply put, we need many more than seven Republicans to vote for cloture and final passage of the bill.

This letter will be signed by Senators REID, DURBIN, SCHUMER, and MURRAY, the Democratic leadership team.

I want to get the bill done. The overwhelming majority of the Democratic caucus has already voted for cloture. The American people are certainly looking to Congress for leadership. We hope President Bush and his Republican allies in Congress will find a way to work with us to deliver this bill to the immigrants, businesses, and all other Americans who deserve it.

If we see new cooperation and a clear way forward from the Republican caucus, I will do everything possible to re-address the immigration issue after the debate on the Energy bill is completed. And it is difficult for me to even say this because I really wanted to move next to the Defense authorization bill. If we can work out something, when we finish this Energy bill, to complete immigration, I want to do that.

Finally, Mr. President, on energy, we will turn our focus this week to one of the great remaining challenges of our time: our national energy policy.

In 1931, Thomas Alva Edison had a meeting with Henry Ford, whose cars were driving up consumer demand for gasoline. This is what Edison told Ford:

I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.

Here it is, 76 years later—76 years later—and we haven't tackled our addiction to oil, and it has grown into a three-pronged crisis: threatening our economy, threatening our Nation's security, and threatening our environment.

Today, we will use 21 million barrels of oil and tomorrow the same. How much is 21 million barrels of oil? It is a ditch 10 feet deep and 200 football fields long or a ditch 10 feet deep and 11 miles long. Every day, we use that oil—every day.

The bill we begin debate on today—the Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection Energy Efficiency Act of 2007—takes several major steps toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil, promoting renewable energy that we produce right here in America, and protecting our environment from global warming. This bill is a substitute to H.R. 6. This bill is a bipartisan bill.

A number of my chairmen came to me and said: We have this great legislation in my committee; can we bring it forward? I said: No, we have to have an energy bill; our initial energy bill has to be bipartisan. So the Energy Committee, under the direction of Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI, came up with a good package. That is part of what we are going to be debating in the Senate.

Then, in the Commerce Committee, Senator STEVENS and Senator INOUE also came up with an extremely important piece of legislation dealing with CAFE standards, which is making cars more efficient. That is going to be in the bill to be brought to the floor.

Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE also worked together to come up with another piece of legislation that we have put in this one bill. Their part of this bill is also excellent and deals with green buildings and making the massive fleet of Federal cars more energy efficient. It is a good piece of legislation, and it is a bipartisan bill.

There will be people wanting to put tax measures on this, but I think we should wait until the tax committee—Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY—does that. This is a bill which we should try to protect the bipartisan aspect of. It really is quite a good bill, and if we are able to pass it, we will save 4 million barrels of oil every day. That is pretty good.

This bill will set new energy efficiency standards for lighting, appliances, and water use. This bill alone will save ½ trillion gallons of water every year. For a place like Nevada, where we get 4 inches of rain every year in Las Vegas, that is a lot of water.

This is a bill which protects consumers by punishing companies that price gouge and manipulate supply for their profits. It is a bill which invests in carbon capture and storage, and it directs the President and his Cabinet to improve diplomatic relations with our energy partners in order to give us more leverage in the global energy market.

Altogether, this bill will save American consumers tens of billions of dollars every year, cut our oil consumption, reduce our dependence on foreign energy, and, by the way, might just save the planet while we are at it.

It is a good, important bill, a bipartisan bill, and as I have indicated, many of my colleagues will be tempted to offer tax amendments. I ask that they wait until the Finance Committee has had an opportunity to make recommendations on an energy tax

amendment before any additional amendments are offered on this bill.

I hope my colleagues will vote in favor of the motion to proceed. In fact, I hope we can proceed to the bill immediately and not have to use the 30 hours. That will allow time for more amendments.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just a brief word about the immigration bill. We could have been wrapping it up tonight.

As I indicated to my good friend, the majority leader, on Thursday afternoon, I thought there was every reason to believe we could have finished the immigration bill by tonight. Instead, we ended up having another cloture vote—in my view, a day or two premature—taking Friday off, and today spending our time on a meaningless resolution giving the President advice about whom the Attorney General ought to be.

Having said that, I appreciate the comments of the majority leader that he would like to finish the immigration bill. There is a substantial number of Republican Senators who believe this bill would be an improvement over the current situation, over the status quo, and so I hope we will be able to chart a path to get us back on track at some point and hopefully complete, on a bipartisan basis, what could well be the most important domestic achievement of this Congress.

I am pleased to hear the majority leader say there is a possibility that we could get back to this measure and wrap it up. That certainly is my hope, and I will look forward to working with him toward that end.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from North Dakota.

ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the issues surrounding

the removal of eight U.S. attorneys last year. Attorney General Gonzales has claimed that he had no involvement in the firing of the U.S. attorneys. In fact, this is his statement. He said:

I was not involved in seeing any memos, was not involved in any discussions about what was going on. That's basically what I knew as the Attorney General.

That is really a stunning claim. His own Chief of Staff, Kyle Sampson, admitted the Attorney General misled the country. He is not alone. Kyle Sampson, former Chief of Staff to the Attorney General, said:

I don't think the Attorney General's statement that he was not involved in any discussions . . . was accurate. I remember discussing with him this process of asking certain U.S. attorneys to resign.

The Washington Post reported, on Michael Battle, the former Director of the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, and I quote from that story:

The former Justice Department official who carried out the firings of eight U.S. attorneys last year told Congress . . . that a memo on the firings was distributed at a November 27 meeting attended by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales.

NBC News reported on William Mercer, the Acting Associate Attorney General:

Justice Department official William W. Mercer told congressional investigators on April 11 that he attended a meeting with the Attorney General . . . to discuss "fired U.S. Attorney Carol Lamm's situation."

It is simply not credible that the Attorney General of the United States had no role in the removal of eight U.S. attorneys. After all, he is the head of the Justice Department. To his credit, the Attorney General did eventually admit that he had misspoken in describing his lack of involvement. Given the growing public record, I don't think he had much choice.

However, to the great disappointment of people on both sides of the aisle, the Attorney General failed miserably in his attempt to set the record straight. In his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Attorney General used the words, "I don't recall," or a variant on those words, 64 times. "I don't recall," "I don't have any recollection," "I have no memory"—64 times. Some counts have that number at over 70. Some even approach 90.

Time after time, the Attorney General was unable to respond to even basic questions. He couldn't explain or couldn't remember why the U.S. attorneys were fired or how he was involved. Again, his performance was truly stunning. His inability or refusal to answer basic questions raises serious issues. Is he incompetent or is he simply playing the loyal soldier? Why were these U.S. attorneys removed?

Unfortunately, the answer that immediately suggests itself is that these firings were politically motivated. Let's look at some of the fired U.S. attorneys and the possible political rea-

sons for their dismissal. Here we have them.

David Iglesias, New Mexico—there was a probe of Democrats not completed quickly enough. We had prominent Republicans complaining that he had not reached conclusion on a probe of Democrats quickly enough.

Carol Lamm, in California—she secured the conviction of a Republican Congressman, also had indicted the No. 3 official at the CIA, and was investigating a Republican Congressman.

Daniel Ogden, Nevada—investigated a Republican Governor and former Republican Congressman.

Bud Cummins in Arkansas—was replaced by a Karl Rove operative. He investigated a Republican Governor of Missouri.

John McCay, in Washington State—to the dismay of local GOP partisans, did not investigate the gubernatorial election won by a Democrat.

Paul Charlton, Arizona—he investigated Republican Congressman Jim Colby and Rick Renzi.

You start to connect the dots here. They said the reason these people were removed was because of poor performance. At least that is the assertion of the Attorney General. But if you look at the written reviews of these same U.S. attorneys, ones who had been removed and ones for whom you can find a clear partisan reason for their removal—look at the written reviews of their performance, which is the reason given by the Attorney General for their removal.

David Iglesias, New Mexico, written review:

Respected by the judiciary, agencies and staff . . . complied with department priorities.

Carol Lamm, California:

Effective manager and respected leader.

Daniel Ogden, Nevada:

Overall evaluation was very positive.

Bud Cummins of Arkansas:

Very competent and highly regarded.

John McCay, Washington State:

Effective, well-regarded and capable leader.

Paul Charlton, Arizona:

Well respected . . . established goals that were appropriate to meet the priorities of the department.

What do we have here? The Attorney General says he wasn't involved. Others of his own staff say he was involved. Then he says it was performance reasons for which these people were removed, but if you look at the written reviews of the people who were removed, their performance reviews were excellent.

But what you do have is a clear political motivation in case after case involving these U.S. attorneys. When you go back to the reason the Attorney General is giving now, that it is performance based, here is what the former supervisor of these prosecutors said:

Comey added that:

The reasons given for their firings have not been consistent with my experience. . . .

And that:

I had very positive encounters with these folks.

Comey was effusive in his praise of several of the fired prosecutors.

Comey was the Deputy Attorney General, and he described Paul Charlton of Arizona as "one of the best." He said he had a very positive view of David Iglesias of New Mexico, and called Daniel Ogden of Las Vegas "straight as a Nevada highway and a fired-up guy."

Of John McCay of Seattle, Comey said:

I was inspired by him.

Now, it doesn't take long to figure out what has happened. The Attorney General comes and testifies he can't recall, he doesn't remember, that he wasn't really a part of it. He is contradicted by his own staff. Then he says it is performance based, but the performance reviews are without exception positive for these people who have been fired. Their supervisor, who was Deputy Attorney General, has rave reviews for virtually all of them.

Let's connect the dots. These are politically motivated firings. I don't know what other conclusion one can come to, and that is a very serious matter. I have been in the Senate for more than 20 years. I have never come to the floor and raised questions about the political motivation of an Attorney General—never. I do so now, and I do it because I believe this is a serious matter.

When the administration of justice becomes politically tainted in this country, that is an enormously serious matter. There is no longer, in my mind, any question but that this Attorney General has tainted his office. That is only further demonstrated by his late night visit to the hospital bed of the Attorney General of the United States, at that time John Ashcroft, to get him to sign documents that he refused to sign about the legality of certain actions of this administration.

We have seen enough. This Attorney General needs to leave his office. He has tainted his office. He does not deserve the high responsibility and enormous honor serving as Attorney General of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

MEDIA BIAS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, recently I returned from Iraq where I visited Tikrit, Baghdad, Bamadi, and Balad with three of my congressional colleagues. We had the opportunity to meet with the commanding officers and troops on each location. On the floor of the Senate I spoke to you about witnessing firsthand some of the progress being made. Since I have seen so little coverage of that progress, I think progress bears repeating.